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ABSTRACT

A 5-year review of the impact of South Carolina's comprehensive reform legislation, the Education Improvement Act of 1984 (EIA), is presented. Throughout the report, comparisons of EIA program productivity in 1989 with pre-EIA performance are displayed in short program summaries, 33 graphs, and 14 tables. The EIA targeted seven major areas for improvement: (1) raising student performance; (2) teaching and testing basic skills; (3) elevating the teaching profession; (4) improving leadership; (5) implementing quality controls and rewarding productivity; (6) creating effective partnerships; and (7) providing school buildings. Most programs are now operating statewide, while some continue to be phased in. On nearly every quantifiable indicator of quality and effectiveness, the data show marked increases since the passage of the EIA. Opinions from students, teachers, and administrators confirm the positive effect of EIA programs on the educational system." (SLD)

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FIVE YEARS LATER: A LOOK AT THE EIA INVESTMENT

as extracted from

WHAT IS THE PENNY BUYING FOR SOUTH CAROLINA?

ASSESSMENT OF THE FIFTH YEAR OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1984

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May 1990

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Introduction

A five-year review of the impact of South Carolina's comprehensive reform legislation, the Education Improvement Act of 1984 (EIA), is presented in this publication. Throughout the report, comparisons of EIA program productivity in 1989 with pre-EIA performance are displayed in short progam summaries, graphs, and tables.

The Education Improvement Act, which was influenced by effective schools research, instituted new programs and built on existing programs. The EIA targeted seven major areas for improvement: raising student performance; teaching/testing basic skills; elevating the teaching profession; improving leadership; implementing quality controls and rewarding productivity; creating effective partnerships; and providing school buildings. Five years later, most programs are now operating statewide, while some continue to be phased in. On nearly every quantifiable indicator of quality and effectiveness, the data show marked increases since the passage of the EIA. In addition, opinions from students, teachers, and administrators confirm the positive effect of EIA programs on the educational system.

This special five-year report, which has been extracted from the annual assessment report prepared to evaluate the impact of the EIA, is being made available to a wide audience. A copy of the annual assessment report, *What is the penny buying for South Carolina?* is available from the Division of Public Accountability, South Carolina Department of Education, 1429 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201.

Five Years Later: A Look at the EIA Investment

South Carolina became one of the first states, following the emergence of a national consensus regarding education, to address the issues of educational reform and improved performance through the enactment of legislation.

Five years ago, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation to improve the productivity of the state's public education system. This legislation, known as the Education Improvement Act of 1984, was in response to expressed concerns from the public and business sector, and to reform proposals from the State Superintendent of Education and the Governor.

In 1983, an opinion poll conducted by Metromark Market Research, Inc. for Chernoff/Silver and Associates found that the public was ready for a change. Two-thirds of the South Carolinians sampled rated the overall quality of public education as fair or poor. Almost nine out of 10 rejected the idea that the public school system in South Carolina was about as good as it would ever be.

Of those responding, 83% agreed that, in order to have better education in South Carolina, the state simply must be willing to spend more money on public school programs (see Graph 1).

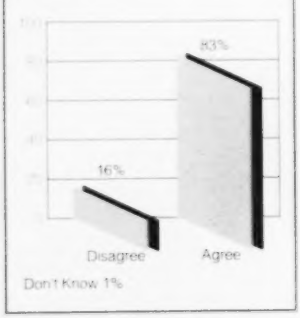
The same percentage of South Carolinians responding to the survey (83%) believed there would be significant improvement in public education in South Carolina if additional funding were provided to support new programs (see Graph 2).

Furthermore, the people of the state saw both economic (new industry, higher-paying jobs) and social (fewer discipline problems in the classroom, fewer people in prison, and reduced welfare rolls) benefits accruing if public education was improved in South Carolina. The public generally agreed on the necessity for additional state spending in order to improve education, endorsed the idea of a state sales tax increase to generate revenue, wanted legislators to support a sales tax increase, and believed public education would improve only if such funding was provided.

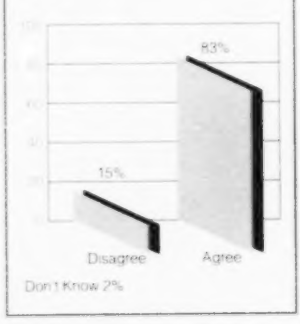
Responding to the public mood and cognizant of the national concern about the state of education and the evidence of educational mediocrity, South Carolina became one of the first states, following the emergence of a national consensus regarding education, to address the issues of educational reform and improved performance through the enactment of legislation. The legislation was influenced by effective schools research and was designed to institute new programs to recognize and foster superior performance, to identify and improve poor performance, and to enhance student achievement through specially designed programs. Five years later, the State of South Carolina has been identified in news articles and other media as a leader in educational reform and has been recognized as enacting major reform legislation to improve the productivity of the educational system.

The State Legislature supported this educational reform legislation with a source of funding--an increase in the state sales tax of one cent--earmarked for elementary and secondary education. The revenue generated by the additional one-cent sales tax has increased each year, as reflected in the chart on the following page (see Graph 3).

Graph 1



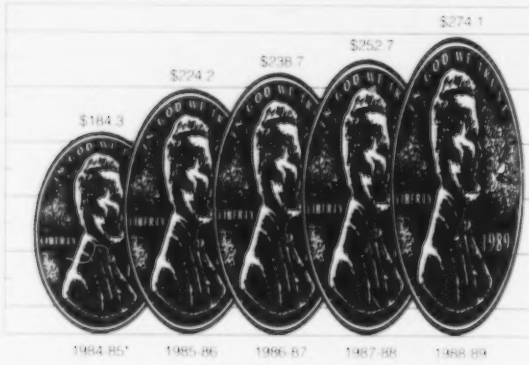
Graph 2



Graph 3

Revenue in Millions Generated by 1 Cent Sales Tax Increase

*In FY 84-85, approximately $21.3 million in General Funds was appropriated for the EIA which increased total funding to about $206 million.



Prior to the passage of the EIA, the public perceived that the state's educational system was not adequately performing its job of educating the next generation.

Indicators of Change

The Education Improvement Act of 1984 received its major impetus from the public perception that the state's educational system was not adequately performing its job of educating the next generation. Many of the measures included in the EIA which were designed to correct these problems had as their main purpose the improvement of academic performance. Now, five years after these changes have been implemented, what has been the impact on the state's schools and their effectiveness in educating young people?

In the classrooms of approximately 1,100 public schools, student attendance increased and has remained at a relatively constant level since 1985-86; and student performance, as measured by standardized tests, has shown steady improvement. In 1988-89, student attendance remained relatively high at 95.7%, with an average of 7.7 days absent per student. On a nationally normed, standardized test (CTBS), student performance has continued to show overall gains in all skill areas for all five grades tested. Students who have historically performed less well on tests--students participating in the free lunch program and black students--continued to show gains, slightly reducing the large margin that existed between the performance of these students and others.

On a state-developed test (BSAP), which measures student mastery of certain skills against set standards, test results continued to show an overall upward trend since the passage of the EIA. Approximately 66% of the tenth-grade students, members of the Class of 1991, passed all three sections of the exit examination on the first attempt. This is the second class that must pass the exam in order to qualify for a high school diploma. For the fifth year, South Carolina was in the forefront of gains on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The SAT is designed to measure the verbal and mathematical abilities needed by students in order to perform well in college. South Carolina leads the nation with a 35-point increase since 1984.

The state has shown little or no improvement in the percentage of high school students remaining in school and graduating with their peers. Approximately one of every three students drops out between the ninth grade and graduation. The percentage of South Carolina high school graduates enrolled in college increased to 48.2% in 1988-89, and the percentage of courses they passed as freshmen increased to 92.4%.

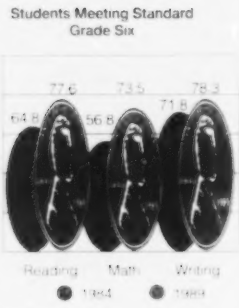
Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB)

The percentage of five-year-old students tested as "ready" for first-grade work has generally increased. In 1984, the EIA provided for mandatory kindergarten and

Graph 4

Five-Year-Olds Ready for First Grade

Graph 5



half-day programs for "at-risk" four-year-olds. Subsequently, the percentage of students tested as "ready" on the CSAB has increased from 72.4% in 1984 to 74.8% in 1988 (see Graph 4).

Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP)

The Basic Skills Assessment Act of 1979 mandated a criterion-referenced state testing program (BSAP) to measure mastery of certain basic skills in reading and math, and beginning with the sixth grade, writing. For each grade level, BSAP test results continued to show an overall upward trend in all three basic skill areas.

Indeed, from 1984 to 1989 every grade has seen an increase in the percentage of students meeting the standard. For example, Graph 5 shows gains for grade six in reading, math, and writing for 1989 as compared to 1984.

Exit Exam

The exit exam is first given in the tenth grade, and students are allowed four attempts to pass all three sections of the exam. Approximately 66% of the tenth-graders taking the exam in the spring of 1989 passed all three sections on their first attempt (see Graph 6). Students who do not meet the standards for the reading, mathematics, or writing subtests receive remediation, as required by the EIA, before retaking the subtest(s) on which they scored below standard. The most recent test results for these students show a higher percentage meeting the standards for each subtest on their second attempt than in the previous year.

Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS)

Student performance on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills has continued to show improvement in all five grades since the first administration of this edition of the test (CTBS/U) in 1983. CTBS is a nationally normed, standardized test designed to measure student proficiency in a wide range of subject areas, including reading, language, math, spelling, reference skills, science, and social studies. South Carolina students have scored higher on the total battery in each year from 1984 through 1989.

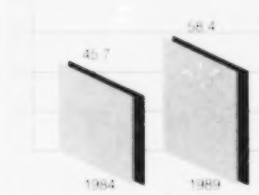
Student performance in South Carolina, as measured by standardized tests, has shown steady improvement since 1984.

Graph 6

Percent of Tenth-Grade Students Scoring Above Exit Exam Standard on First Attempt, 1986 and 1989

Since 1984, there has been relatively no change in the percentage of high school students remaining in school and graduating with their peers.

Graph 7



Percent Scoring Above National Norm on Battery Total, Grade Seven

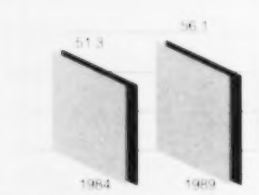
In terms of the percentage of students scoring above the national average on the total battery, grade seven has experienced the greatest gain, while grade eleven has had the smallest gain (see Graphs 7 and 8).

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

From 1984 to 1989, South Carolina showed a gain of 35 points on the SAT, as compared to a six-point gain for the nation (see Graph 9).

The Scholastic Aptitude Test is a nationally standardized test designed to measure the verbal and mathematics abilities students need in order to perform well in college. In 1984, the state average SAT score was 803 (math and verbal scores combined), while in 1989 the state average had risen to 838, an increase of 35 points. On the national level, SAT scores increased an average of six points, from 897 in 1984 to 903 in 1989.

Graph 8

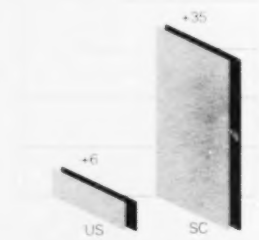


Percent Scoring Above National Norm on Battery Total, Grade Eleven

Dropout Rates and Holding Power

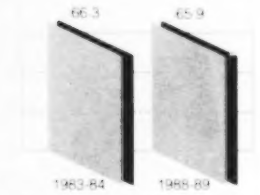
Since 1984, there has been relatively no change in the percentage of high school students remaining in school and graduating with their peers. Graph 10 shows the number of South Carolina students graduating from high school expressed as a percent of ninth-grade membership four years earlier. The indicator is known as "holding power" and is the only method currently used nationwide for determining the dropout rate. In South Carolina, approximately one in every three students does not complete school with his original ninth-grade class.

Graph 9



Point Change in Mean SAT Scores

Graph 10



Percent Graduating With Peers*

*estimate

The percentage of students dropping out of school is a continuing problem for the state.

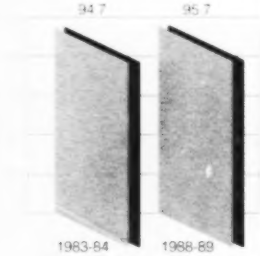
Student Attendance

Student attendance also increased from 94.7% in 1983 -84 to 95.7% in 1988-89 (see Graph 11). Because of this increase, the average student in South Carolina now attends school almost two days more a year without lengthening the school year. The average days absent for a student has dropped from 9.6 days in 1983-84 to 7.7 days in 1988-89.

College Enrollment and Success

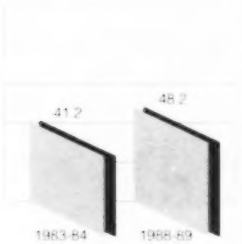
The percentage of South Carolina high school gradu-

Graph 11



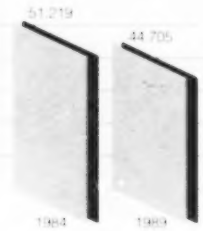
Student Attendance Rate

Graph 12



High School Graduates Entering College

Graph 13



Private School Enrollment

ates entering college continued to increase in 1988-89. Of the state's high school graduates, 48.2% entered college--up from 41.2% in 1983-84, an increase of 7 percentage points (see Graph 12). The percentage of courses passed by freshmen was also up, from 91.3% in 1983-84 to 92.4% in 1988-89. This increase means that 9,140 more courses were passed by freshmen in 1988-89 than in 1983-84.

Enrollment in Public and Private Schools

The enrollment in private schools may be considered an indirect measure of confidence in the public school system. In 1988-89, a total of 44,705 students were enrolled in private elementary and secondary schools in the state, a decrease from 51,219 students in 1983-84 (see Graph 13). During the same time period, the public school enrollment increased by almost 14,000 students.

Community Involvement

In 1988-89, school districts reported that more than 6,000 businesses were involved in various business education partnerships--more than an 800% increase since the state initiated EIA reform efforts in 1984. Each of the 91 school districts has had at least one partnership in operation (see Graph 14).

A total of 113,580 volunteers participated in various school projects in 1988-89. The majority of these volunteers were parents.

EIA Programs to Improve Student Performance

The EIA focuses on specific programs to improve student performance. Included in the Act are programs for four-year-olds, compensatory and remedial students, gifted and talented students, and vocational students. Those programs already in place in the schools received added emphasis and expansion through the EIA.

Half-Day Program for Four-Year-Olds

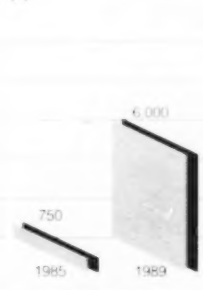
Evaluation studies of the half-day program for four-year-olds, conducted since 1984, indicated that the program was serving those at risk of school failure as the program was intended. The evaluation studies further indicated that the program was helping to reduce the risk of failure for students in the early elementary grades (see Graph 15).

Remedial/Compensatory Programs

For the fourth consecutive year, students made impressive gains in remedial and compensatory programs. Statewide average NCE gains for 1988 were generally consistent with earlier years and continued

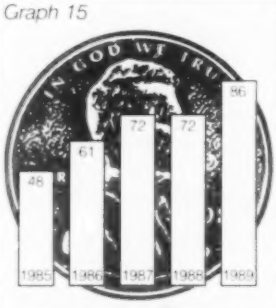
For the fourth consecutive year, students made impressive gains in remedial and compensatory programs.

Graph 14



Businesses in Business/Education Partnerships

Graph 15



Number of Districts Implementing Voluntary Programs for Four-Year-Olds

Table 16

Program	Statewide Average NCE Gains			
	1985	1986	1987	1988
Compensatory Reading	4.85	4.42	5.93	5.11
Compensatory Mathematics	8.91	7.92	9.01	8.73
Remedial Reading	3.34	5.42	3.78	4.15
Remedial Mathematics	6.65	5.95	5.93	4.60

to show achievement gains for students participating in the remedial and compensatory programs (see Table 16).

Between 1984 and 1989, the number of students taking an AP exam more than doubled.

Gifted and Talented Programs

The EIA requires the provision of programs for students with high ability and demonstrated performance in academic and artistic areas. Nearly all students in academic programs were served during the regular school year, while artistic programs served a sizable portion of students in summer programs. Enrollment in these programs has almost tripled since the 1984-85 school year (see Graph 17).

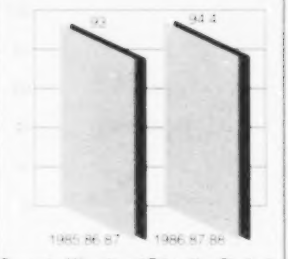
Advanced Placement (AP)

Prior to the 1984-85 school year, students could take an advanced placement course without taking an AP exam; however, the passage of the EIA required students enrolled in an AP course to take the test. Between 1984 and 1989, the number of students taking an AP exam more than doubled (see Graph 18). The percentage of students qualifying for college credit on the exams increased from 39% in 1984-85 to 56% in 1988-89.

Vocational Education

The most recent three-year analysis of graduates of vocational education programs showed a 94.4% placement rate. Of these graduates, 44.3% were employed in areas related to their training; an additional 33.4% were in a related area either in the military or in post-secondary education; 16.7% were employed in an unrelated area; and 5.6% were unemployed (see Graph 19).

Graph 19

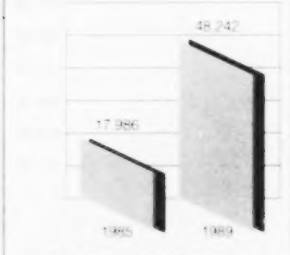


Percent of Vocational Education Students Placed For 3-Year Periods

Continuum of Care

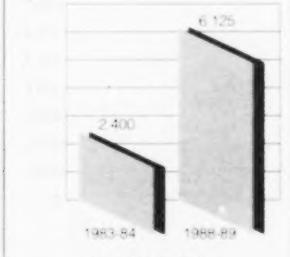
The Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children provides services to severely emotionally disturbed children in order that they may better benefit from special education. The number of clients served by the Continuum has increased from 40 in 1984 to 234 in 1989 (see Graph 20).

Graph 17



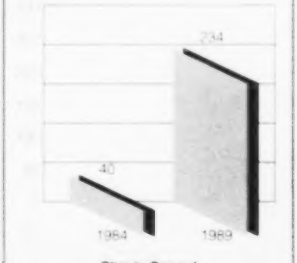
Academic and Arts Enrollment

Graph 18



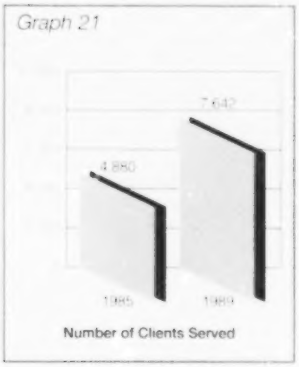
Students Tested

Graph 20



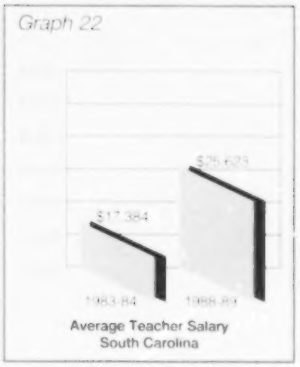
Clients Served

Graph 21



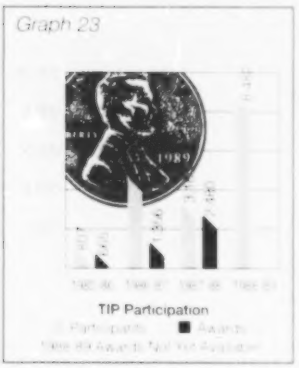
Number of Clients Served

Graph 22



Average Teacher Salary
South Carolina

Graph 23



TIP Participation

School Intervention Program (ScIP)

The South Carolina Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse provides alcohol and drug abuse intervention, prevention, and treatment services for the public schools in the state. The number of students receiving these services has increased from 4,880 in 1985 to 7,642 in 1989 (see Graph 21).

EIA Programs for Teachers

Perhaps one of the most important ingredients in any attempt at educational reform is the faculty which must put the plans for change into practice. Thus, the success of such reforms is dependent upon the effectiveness of the teachers involved.

It is important for the continued improvement of the state's public education system to attract and retain qualified individuals in the teaching profession. To this end, many of the EIA programs focus on enhancing the teaching profession through the strengthening of teacher training, evaluation, and compensation. The EIA raised teacher salaries to the Southeastern average, established an incentive program for teachers, and funded programs for training and evaluating existing staff as well as for recruiting future teachers.

Teacher Salaries

The commitment by the EIA to annually adjust the state's average teacher salary to equal the Southeastern average has resulted in an average salary increase for the state's teachers from $17,384 in 1983-84 to $25,623 in 1988-89. Even so, the state's average salary remains less than that of Georgia and North Carolina, the state's nearest competitors in the teacher pool (see Graph 22).

Teacher Incentive Program

After three years of pilot-testing, statewide implementation of the Teacher Incentive Program occurred in 1988-89. Approximately 90% of the participants are teachers and 10% are instructional support personnel (see Graph 23). In the last evaluation of the program, a majority of participants believed it was possible to implement an unbiased process to identify and reward superior teachers in their district.

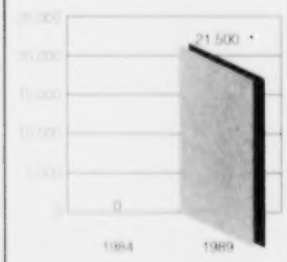
Teacher In-service

Since 1984, approximately 21,500 teachers have participated in in-service training programs to upgrade their skills through the Program for Effective Teaching (PET). In addition to PET, 17 other programs have been selected for in-service training in the districts. These programs emphasize instructional, supervisory, classroom management, and human relations skills (see Graph 24).

The commitment to annually adjust the state's average teacher salary to equal the Southeastern average has resulted in an average salary increase from $17,384 in 1983-84 to $25,623 in 1988-89.

Teacher attendance rates have improved since 1984.

Graph 24



Number of Teachers Trained: PET

Prospective Teacher Loan Program

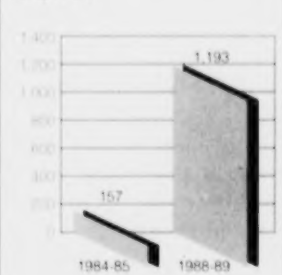
A loan program for prospective teachers has provided loans to 3,536 eligible individuals since the inception of the program in 1984-85. In the first year, 157 individuals received loans, a number which increased seven-fold by 1989 (see Graph 25). Of those reaching repayment stage, 46% were not teaching but were repaying their loans.

Indicators of Change in the Teaching Profession

Teacher Experience

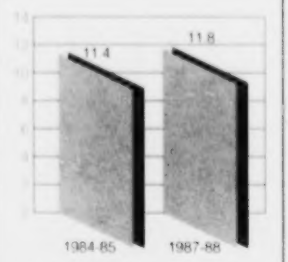
In 1984-85, the average experience for the elementary and secondary teaching staff was 11.4 years. In

Graph 25



Number of Loans

Graph 26



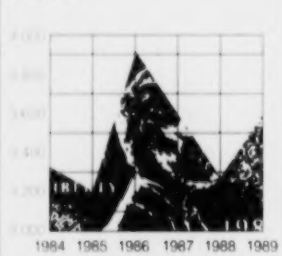
Teacher Experience in Years

1987-88, the most recent year for which data were available, this figure reached 11.8 (see Graph 26). In the first year of the EIA, almost half of the teachers had 10 years or less experience. Another 34% had between 10 and 20 years, and 16% had been in the profession for over 20 years. In 1989, approximately 43% of the teachers had taught for 10 years or less. The figures for 10 to 20 years and over 20 years, however, had risen (40% and 17%, respectively).

Teacher Certification

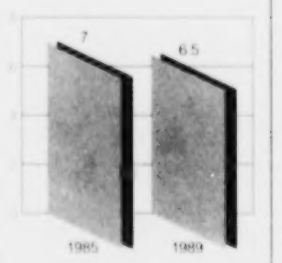
The number of initial certificates issued to teachers in 1983-84 (3,307) increased to 3,891 in 1985-86 but

Graph 27



Initial Teacher Certification

Graph 28



Days Absent

exhibited an annual decline of 8% for two consecutive years (3,277 in 1987-88). In 1988-89, the number increased to 3,647 (see Graph 27).

The EIA called for the development of a conditional certification program in critical need areas to alleviate teacher shortages in South Carolina. Through this three-year program, candidates can meet certain criteria to become eligible for a full professional teaching certificate. The number of conditional teaching certificates issued in critical need areas has dropped from 63 in 1984-85 to 37 in 1988-89.

Teacher Attendance

Teacher attendance rates have improved since 1984. Teacher attendance figures in 1984-85 showed an average of 7.0 days absent, excluding long-term illness and professional leave. In 1988-89, teachers were absent an average of 6.5 days during their 190-day contract period (see Graph 28).

EIA Programs for Administrators

According to effective schools research, principals are key individuals in bringing about school improvement. Since district administrators provide leadership in the effective implementation of the policies and programs of the EIA, many of the Act's programs focused on strengthening the leadership and management skills of administrators.

Principal Evaluation Program (PEP)

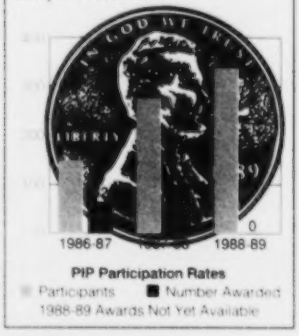
The Principal Evaluation Program (PEP) was implemented statewide in 1987-88 (see Table 1-29). The 1987-88 administration of the program was examined through a validation study of 22 districts. Results of the study indicated that 14 districts administered the program as required. The remaining eight districts rectified their deficiencies in the admin-istration of the program by the end of 1988-89.

Table 1-29

Principal Evaluation Program

1985	Criteria Development
1986	Instrument Development
1987	Field Test
1988	Statewide Implementation
1989	Program Validation

Graph 1-30



Principal Incentive Program (PIP)

The final year of pilot testing the Principal Incentive Program was completed in 1988-89. In the pilot-test districts, 60% of the principals participated in the program (see Graph 1-30). Roughly one-third of the participants in 1987-88 received awards. In the last evaluation, a majority of the participants (57%) in the pilot-test districts believed PIP encouraged principals to improve their administrative skills.

Training Programs for Administrators

The EIA requires all superintendents and principals to participate every two years in at least one seminar designed to improve administrative skills or instructional leadership. In a recent survey of administrators, 92% said the seminars were accomplishing the purpose for which they were intended; 92% also indicated the seminars were effective (see Graph 1-31).

Graph 1-31

Assessment of Prospective Principals

The EIA requires all prospective principals to be evaluated by the Assessment Center of the State Department of Education prior to their appointment to the principalship. Only candidates who have previously served as principals are exempt from the Assessment Center program. Since 1984, the Assessment Center has assessed 936 prospective principals (see Table 1-32).

Principal Apprenticeship Program

Apprenticeships offer aspiring principals an

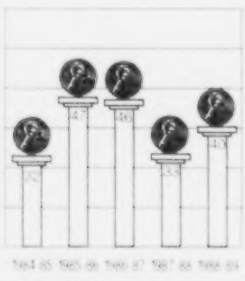
Table 1-32

Assessment Center

- 936 prospective candidates assessed
- In 1988-89, 150 candidates assessed
- As of June 30, 1989, 242 participants were promoted to principalship
- Approximately 354 assessors trained

In a recent survey of school administrators, 92% said the training required by the EIA to improve administrative skills and instructional leadership was accomplishing the purpose for which it was intended.

Graph 33



Completed Apprenticeships

Graph 34

Impaired Districts

Graph 35

SIRP Recipients

Since 1984-85, approximately 80% of the 198 participants in the Principal Apprenticeship Program have been promoted to the position of principal or assistant principal.

opportunity to develop needed competencies by spending a full school year working with an experienced principal. Since 1984-85, approximately 80% of the 198 participants in the program have been promoted to the position of principal or assistant principal (see Graph 33).

EIA Quality Control Programs for Schools and Districts

The quality of the programs offered by schools and school districts has a direct relationship to student achievement and productivity. Two EIA provisions focus on the issue of quality programs: the impaired district provision and the School Incentive Reward Program.

Impaired District Provision

An annual evaluation of the quality of education in each school district is required by the EIA. School districts not meeting the established standards are declared "seriously impaired" and must implement procedures to correct the deficiencies. Since 1985, nine districts have received that designation and then been removed from that status the following year. One of the districts declared seriously impaired in 1985 was again placed in that category in 1988. No district was declared "seriously impaired" in 1989 (see Graph 34).

School Incentive Reward Program

The EIA established a program to reward schools and school districts for exceptional or improved performance. Since 1985, approximately 25% of the schools have received annually an incentive reward. Of the 272 schools that were reward recipients in 1987-88, 123 received a reward for two consecutive years, 39 for three consecutive years, and 21 for all four years (see Graph 35).

1989 Teacher and Administrator Opinion Surveys

In September 1989, the Division of Public Accountability conducted a survey of a sample of teachers in the state requesting their opinions on selected EIA programs. Of the teachers who were sampled, 40% responded--most of whom taught in the public schools before the EIA (74.5%).

For each of the 15 EIA programs listed on the survey, respondents were asked to indicate (1) if they were aware of the program, (2) if they had any personal participation in or direct benefit from the program, (3) if the program had affected their decision to enter or remain in teaching, (4) if the program had affected their morale, and (5) if the program had affected teacher qualifications.

Three programs had the most favorable response in terms of affecting teaching, morale, and teacher qualifications.

EIA Programs With Most Favorable Teacher Response 1989 Teacher Opinion Survey

- Raising Teachers Salaries to Southeastern Average
- Tuition Reimbursement for Recertification
- Teacher In-service Requirement

EIA Programs With Most Favorable Administrator Response 1989 Administrator Opinion Survey

- Administrator Seminars
- Business/Education Involvement
- Competitive School Grants
- Competitive Teacher Grants
- School Volunteer Programs
- Raising Teachers Salaries to the Southeastern Average
- School Improvement Councils

In September 1989, the Division of Public Accountability conducted a written survey of administrators, similar to the teacher survey, requesting their opinions on selected EIA programs. Each school principal and district superintendent in the state was mailed a copy of the survey.

One of the questions on the survey asked the administrators to indicate the impact the EIA had on education in the state. Responses of the superintendents and principals are reported separately.

For each of the 16 programs listed on the administrator survey, respondents were asked to indicate (1) their level of knowledge about the program, (2) if the program was accomplishing the purpose for which it was intended, (3) if the program was effective in their school/district, (4) if the program had an impact on staff morale in their school/district, and (5) if the program had an effect on staff performance in their school/district.

Administrators identified seven programs as having the most favorable response in terms of accomplishing the program's purpose, being effective, having an impact on staff morale, and resulting in better staff performance.

Although the questions regarding EIA programs differed on the teacher and administrator opinion surveys, the following conclusion can be drawn regarding one of the EIA provisions. Only one EIA program was identified by a majority of teachers as having affected their decision to enter or remain in teaching -- raising teachers salaries to the Southeastern average. The same program received the overall most favorable responses from administrators in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the program, being effective, having an impact on staff morale, and resulting in better staff performance.

Only one EIA program was identified by a majority of teachers as having affected their decision to enter or remain in teaching-- raising teachers salaries to the Southeastern average.

Administrator Reaction to the EIA
1989 Administrator Opinion Survey

Question: **When considering the EIA as a total program and its impact on the entire state, do you feel that education**

Responses: **has changed for the better, is neither better nor worse, or has changed for the worse?**

Responses:	Principals	Superintendents
Better	92.95%	100.0%
Neither	5.3%	0.0%
Worse	1.1%	0.0%
No response	0.5%	0.0%

More than 80% of the teachers surveyed indicated the EIA had improved the quality of education.

Quality of Education
Teacher Opinion Surveys
1985 and 1988

Question: **How would you rate the overall quality of education in South Carolina: excellent, good, fair, or poor?**

Responses:	1985	1988
Excellent	11.8%	14.5%
Good	65.3%	70.7%
Fair	19.0%	13.4%
Poor	3.5%	1.4%
Don't know	.5%	.7%

More administrators responded positively to each of these four questions related to the teacher salary provision than any other EIA provision on the survey.

Teacher Opinion Surveys, 1985 and 1988

South Carolina studies of teacher opinion concerning the EIA and education reform have been conducted by this state for four consecutive years. In 1985, Metromark Market Research, Inc. conducted the first opinion study of teachers; in 1988, the most recent teacher survey was conducted by MGT of America, Inc. Several of the questions on these two surveys were the same and permit an examination of opinion trends since the enactment of the EIA. The following is a sampling of teacher attitudes toward their jobs, their students and the EIA itself in 1985, soon after the Act was implemented, and in 1988, after the full impact of the reforms was being felt.

Overall Quality of Education

First, teacher attitudes about the state's education system are examined. Above are comparisons in perceptions of the overall quality of education in the state.

How then, do teachers rate the EIA itself? Have their ratings of the reforms contained in the EIA changed since its first year? When teachers were asked to respond to the statement that the EIA has improved the quality of education in the schools, the percentage agreeing increased from 83.1% in 1985 to 88.8% in 1988.

Resources for Teaching

There has been a marked change in teacher

Teacher Reaction to the EIA
Teacher Opinion Surveys
1985 and 1988

Statement: **The Education Improvement Act has improved the quality of education in the schools in my part of South Carolina.**

Responses:	1985	1988
Agree strongly	43.3%	34.3%
Agree	39.8%	54.5%
Neutral	2.3%	.6%
Disagree	9.5%	8.8%
Disagree strongly	2.5%	1.8%
Don't know	2.8%	1.0%

Teacher Reaction to Availability of Materials and Supplies
Teacher Opinion Surveys
1985 and 1988

Statement: **Public schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs, such as writing and arithmetic.**

Responses:	1985	1988
Agree strongly	22.8%	26.7%
Agree	34.0%	60.3%
Neutral	1.0%	0.0%
Disagree	22.8%	11.6%
Disagree strongly	16.3%	1.4%
Don't know	3.3%	.6%

perceptions regarding the availability of materials and supplies. It can be generalized that teachers in 1988 felt better supplied to teach their students the basics than they did in 1985.

National Teacher Opinion Survey

During the past five years, many states in the nation have enacted education reform legislation. To assess the impact of the reform efforts on schools and classrooms in the various states, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching conducted a national survey of teacher opinion in 1988. The survey, which involved more than 13,500 teachers, asked teachers to indicate their perceptions of the changes that had occurred in the conditions for teachers and in the learning opportunities for students.

The report of the 1988 survey, entitled *Report Card on School Reform--The Teachers Speak*, contains the responses of South Carolina teachers as compared with those of teachers from the other 49 states. When compared with the nation, the responses of South Carolina's teachers were positive overall and ranked first or second nationally on a majority of the items. Specifically, teachers in South Carolina were the most positive in the nation, ranking in the top 10 states in 45 of the 54 survey items.

South Carolina teachers indicated that many public school conditions have improved since the enactment of the EIA.

Responses to items related to community and parental involvement were extremely positive when compared with other states.

Several provisions of the EIA relate to strengthening the teaching profession, and several portions of the Carnegie survey pertained to these areas. The responses indicate South Carolina teachers perceive that a variety of changes have occurred since the enactment of the state's reform legislation.

South Carolina Teacher Responses Related to School Conditions 1988 National Teacher Opinion Survey

Survey Item	Percent Agree	National Ranking of Responses
Instruction tailored to students' needs had increased	78%	1
Classroom interruptions were fewer	68%	1
Classroom order had improved	56%	2
Students were more serious	52%	1
Academic testing had increased	85%	2

South Carolina Teacher Responses Related to the Community 1988 National Teacher Opinion Survey

Survey Item	Percent Agree	National Ranking of Responses
Partnerships with business and industry had improved	80%	1
Parental involvement had improved	65%	1
Parental support for teachers had improved	44%	1
Community respect for teachers had improved	41%	2

South Carolina teachers indicated that many public school conditions have improved since the enactment of the EIA.

South Carolina Teacher Responses Related to the Teaching Profession 1988 National Teacher Opinion Survey

Survey Item	Percent Agree	National Ranking of Responses
Salaries had increased	82%	4
Teacher awards had increased	58%	1
Use of technology for teaching had improved	80%	6
In-service education opportunities had increased	64%	8
Money to support innovative ideas had increased	54%	3
Burden of bureaucratic paperwork had increased	70%	39
Fiscal resources had increased	57%	2

. . . a greater percentage of South Carolina's teachers (52%) gave this state's reform a grade of "A" or "B" than did teachers from any other state.

When teachers were asked in this national survey to grade their respective educational reform movements, a greater percentage of South Carolina's teachers (52%) gave this state's reform a grade of either "A" or "B" than did teachers from any other state. Conversely, fewer South Carolina teachers gave their reform effort a grade of either "D" or "F"--the lowest percentage in the nation.

South Carolina led the nation in the percentage of teachers (40%) who responded that teacher morale had improved following the enactment of education reform legislation in this state. A larger percentage of South Carolina teachers (46%) said morale was worse.

South Carolina also ranked first among the states when considering the percentage of teachers who perceived improvement after the reform effort in basic skill areas such as math (89%), reading (86%), and writing (85%).

Student Opinions

One end result of educational reform which cannot be overlooked is its impact on students. Therefore, this section provides several indicators of change in student perceptions since the EIA was enacted. Students have been surveyed every year since 1986 to determine their perceptions of change in the public schools. The following compares 1986 responses to those of 1989 on items related to learning.

To determine what they perceived as the overall goal, or emphasis, of their schools, students were asked to respond to the statement, "Learning is my school's most important goal." Their responses indicated a significant shift in students' perceptions of their school's goals. More students believed that learning was the primary goal of their school in 1989 than did students in 1986.

When asked if teachers provided feedback to students on their academic progress, there was a significant difference between responses to this question in 1986 and 1989. Students in 1989 apparently believed that teachers were much more likely to keep

Learning as School Goal Student Opinion Surveys 1986 and 1989

Statement:	Learning is my school's most important goal.	
Responses:	**1986**	**1989**
Strongly agree	27.6%	40.8%
Agree	38.8%	40.1%
Don't know	12.8%	7.0%
Disagree	17.1%	9.6%
Strongly disagree	3.7%	2.5%

Student Reaction to Teacher Feedback
Student Opinion Surveys
1986 and 1989

Statement: **My teacher lets me know how well I am doing in my schoolwork.**

Responses:	**1986**	**1989**
Strongly agree	14.8%	29.4%
Agree	44.3%	50.9%
Don't know	9.4%	2.1%
Disagree	24.7%	13.1%
Strongly disagree	6.8%	4.5%

them apprised of their academic progress than students did in 1986.

Public Sentiment

Since the enactment of the Education Improvement Act, the numerous programs specified by the Act have been implemented by the school districts of the state. When the law was enacted, it was envisioned by the lawmakers that the combined effect of these programs would be a strengthening of the educational system. Not only would students be better prepared for employment or for further education, but the citizens of the state would sense that an improvement was taking place and would be aware of a change in the educational system.

Since the EIA was enacted, the Division of Public Accountability has regularly conducted telephone surveys of the public, under contract, to determine if they perceive that the educational system is improving. The most recent poll of the public was conducted in August 1988. One of the questions related to the quality of education in the state. The same question was asked in 1983 on an opinion poll conducted by Metromark Market Research, Inc. for Chernoff/Silver and Associates prior to the passage of the EIA, and the two sets of responses to the question are presented in the chart below.

Quality of Education
Public Opinion Surveys
1983 and 1988

Question: **How would you rate the overall quality of education in South Carolina? Would you say the quality of public education is excellent, good, fair, or poor?**

Responses:	**1983**	**1988**
Excellent	3%	4%
Good	33%	36%
Fair	35%	42%
Poor	27%	13%
Don't know	2%	6%

In 1988 when asked if emphasis on learning in the last year had increased in the public schools, 77% of the public agreed with the statement. Eighty-four percent agreed that the public schools in their area could be described as "a good place to learn." When asked if parents in their area were satisfied with their children's education, about half of those surveyed said that they were (51%).

In the 1988 Gallup Poll, 37% of the public surveyed nationally rated their schools with an "A" or "B." In the South Carolina survey conducted the same year, 45% of the public graded the schools in the same categories.

From an examination of these responses, the public appears to be aware of changes being made in the educational system, but they also indicate that there is still room for improvement.

Business Reactions

One of the most important forces in the drafting and lobbying effort to enact the Education Improvement Act was the state's business community. Following the implementation of EIA programs, the business sector expected some

. . . the public appears to be aware of changes being made in the educational system, but they also indicate that there is still room for improvement.

After five years, what do business people think about EIA? . . . In general, they perceive the impact of the EIA on their business as positive.

benefits to be derived from an improved education system and the resultant better trained work force. After five years, what do business people think about the EIA? Has it been a benefit to them?

A questionnaire concerning business and the economy which included a question on the EIA was sent to 195 senior executives from South Carolina and Charlotte, North Carolina. Of those polled, 105 individuals responded.

In the June 1989 study conducted by Metromark Market Research, Inc. for the State Newspaper, businessmen and women were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the EIA had a positive impact on their business (see Graph 36). In general, they perceived the impact of the EIA on their business as positive. The responses were positive across geographic boundaries, age groups, company sizes, and types of businesses. Indeed, in every case, over 60% of the respondents believed that the EIA has had a positive impact on their businesses.

In a second question, respondents were asked to select what they considered the most pressing issue facing South Carolina today. Respondents identified public education as the most pressing issue facing South Carolina by a substantial margin.

Graph 36

Impact of EIA on Business

The EIA in Perspective

In response to the challenges of worldwide economic competition, educational improvement has been of paramount importance in America during most of the 1980s. During this time, a great deal of national attention has been focused on South Carolina as a leader in educational reform, innovation, and improvement.

Former U.S. Secretaries of Education Terrel Bell and

Business Executives Identify Pressing Issues
1989 Business Opinion Survey

Question: **Of the following issues, which ONE do you feel is the most pressing issue facing South Carolina today?**

Responses:	**Total**
1. Quality of public school education	55.2%
2. Cost of health care	14.3%
3. Availability of skilled labor	12.4%
4. Recruiting business and industry to South Carolina	8.6%
5. Protection of beachfront environment	1.0%
6. Quality of higher education	1.0%
7. Taxes	1.0%
8. Don't know	6.7%

William J. Bennett have singled out South Carolina for the effective strategies being used to upgrade the public schools. Stories regarding the South Carolina Education Improvement Act initiatives have been featured in numerous national publications--*The Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Fortune*, and *Time*--and on "Good Morning America."

The attention on the Palmetto State has been due in part to the results gained from the education reforms, as well as the unusual features employed in the South Carolina reform effort. Unlike almost any other state, the process of developing the reforms in South Carolina involved hundreds of statewide leaders in business, education, and government, as well as thousands of local citizens and educators. The Governor and the State Superintendent of Education, along with key representatives from business, education, and the General Assembly, provided the continuing leadership for the reform efforts.

In a study by the Rand Corporation, the package of reforms was considered to be the most comprehensive in the nation. The reforms were designed to have a positive effect on students in all grades and on the entire educational community. The reforms also reached beyond the classroom walls to parents, the community, and businesses. A permanent funding source was dedicated specifically for the reforms, which allowed an orderly phase-in of the initiatives. Mechanisms were put in place to maintain ongoing accountability and to monitor the reforms and the results.

The Education Improvement Act has resulted in steady improvement in the state's public education system. South Carolina is on target in meeting the goals set for 1989 as established in 1983 by key business, government, and educational leaders. For example, one goal was to increase by 100,000 the number of students meeting basic skill standards in 1989. That goal was reached in 1986-87, three years ahead of schedule.

Despite the progress, much remains to be done in South Carolina and in the nation to be competitive in the global economy. The high school dropout rate is far too high nationwide, and the same is true in South Carolina. Despite improved readiness for schools in South Carolina, too many young children are entering first grade far behind and have difficulty catching up. Despite large gains in basic skills achievement, many students--particularly in middle, junior, and high schools--need consistent support in order to improve. Although South Carolina has made advancements in areas beyond the basics (i.e., the number of students taking advanced placement exams has more than doubled), more emphasis on problem-solving skills and encouragement of creativity is needed for South Carolinians to be competitive in the future.

Despite the progress, much remains to be done in South Carolina and in the nation to be competitive in the global economy.

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